

Suddenly Managing Remotely!

Making adjustments to keep your team engaged and productive

This is for anyone who is new to remote management of a fully remote team. Many of us have found ourselves working from home and also leading a team that's home, distracted, worried and unaccustomed to operating this way. And let's be honest, any part-time remote or "flex" work arrangements we've managed previously **did not prepare us** for management a la Coronavirus.

Below are some **recommended management adjustments** to improve team engagement and productivity. The goals listed below were derived from challenges reported by dozens of managers since the beginning of March 2020. **Your goal: find a few adjustments that you can make to be more effective in your current circumstance.** Do not try to do it all. Focus only on goals that will impact your team the most.

You are not alone in this. If you would like additional support, contact Behavioral Health Consultants Employee Assistance Program for a confidential consultation at 800-864-2742 or 203 407-1029.

Goals	Recommended adjustments
Shift your focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept that remote management requires 2x or 3x the amount of time as before. If managing was 25% of your time, it needs to become 50-70% of your time.• Reassess your own workload to focus on the needs of your team. Your goal: maximize your team's ability to be productive.
Create direction & meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reassess priorities. Which work is critical? Most organizations are slowing or stopping non-critical work.• Reinforce old assignments and clarify new ones. Be precise.• If not self-evident, identify needed collaborations among team members.• Take extra time to emphasize the value in everyone's work. People need purpose and clarity in uncertain times.
Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This cannot be overdone, and it takes time. If something is important:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- say it in group meetings (Zoom, Google Hangout, conference calls, etc.)- write follow-up group emails so that everyone sees the same thing, & then...- touch base with individuals to make sure they are in agreement.
Follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assume you need to do twice the outreach to keep people connected.• Set two-way follow up expectations: Ask "when will I hear from you on this?" and inform colleagues when you will get back to them (and then do it).

Let them be excellent

- Once you have established priorities, timelines and follow up plans... **get out of the way.**
- Offer to trouble shoot and assist, but to the extent possible, do NOT reenter the work. Remember to follow up.
- Remote micro management will ensure the quick death of employee engagement and motivation; and you'll just bring things to a crawl.

Feedback

- Be deliberate and precise in your feedback, especially positive feedback. It gives the work meaning and makes the lonely efforts worthwhile.
- Set the goal of giving feedback to every direct report at least twice per week.
- Since so many of the usual indicators of where someone stands are missing, it needs to come from you. Either enable improvement or reinforce good work. In lieu of feedback, say Thank You.

Get them together

- It's more difficult to create a sense of team and community from afar. As their manager, you need to do this deliberately. Suggestions include:
 - Adopt a platform like Zoom, Google Hangouts, Any Meeting, etc. to regularly bring everyone face to face.
 - Let the meeting be lighthearted before the work is discussed. Tell your trapped-at-home story and get the team talking. It's powerful to reconnect in such a basic human way. **Let community happen.**
 - Discuss priorities, accountabilities, timelines and the new processes. Let everyone hear/share the same information at the same time.

Model it

- Set an example by following "in culture" routines, including when you log-on and how early/late you make requests. Encourage people to shut work off and "go home". The COVID-19 situation is proving to be a marathon...help your team sustain it.
 - In all exchanges – listen to how people are doing. Work aside, times are stressful and everyone is managing work and home at the same time.
 - Demonstrate empathy even when you cannot fix their issues (kid care, fear, etc.). Keep in mind that parents have their kids at work...all day.
 - Offer your own experiences. Employees will look to you to know how the organization is doing and what to expect.
 - Be genuine in what you know, keeping in mind that you may be privy to developing plans that you're not yet at liberty to share.
 - Realize that your reactions to things are being closely watched.
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